

From: Sr.
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I have designed industrial instruments and other products since 1970. As an independent consultant, it is necessary for my work to be installed and read by my customers' systems. So, I struggle to stay in business because I cannot afford the continual drain on my time and physical energy that results from Microsoft's periodic Operating Systems woes and planned product obsolescence. At the same time, I cannot provide reports and data to my clients unless I continue to remain up to date with my Microsoft software.

For the record, I started using Microsoft when it was Windows 3.1. I have changed to the next version reluctantly, and only at the point in time when Microsoft refused to continue its support of the prior product. That migration path wound through Windows 3.10, 3.10a, Windows 95, NT3.51, and NT4.0. I stare into the near future with dread: Windows XP is not for me, but I don't know what else I may be able to do. At each change, Microsoft collects more money. With each version, I spend no less than 100 hours getting my equipment to work again, sometimes finding that a printer (or other device) is no longer "supported" by Microsoft's latest product and must be replaced.

Mr. Gates is a pioneer. His company has found a method by which he can deliver a product that isn't finished yet, charge more for it than it will ever be worth, and have his quality assurance testing conducted by paying customers. The only partial success I have enjoyed is that I have avoided using Internet Explorer or Microsoft Outlook. Even without all those security problems (read, design defects), other Microsoft products have consumed far too much of my time and patience.

The existing settlement seems to me a bald faced sellout. I would like to see my government (Federal as well as State) do more than cower uncertainly before such a large political contributor . . . who also happens to have been guilty of breaking the law. I would sincerely hope that we may find a restored balance in our priorities: it is an old principle of law that one who abuses the law should not benefit from that abuse. I would love to see that attitude regain its earlier vitality.

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